



15800 Calvary Rd
Kansas City, MO 64147

Syllabus

Course: BI238D/ND Acts (blended*)
Credit: 2 Semester Hours
Semester: Spring 2023 (Cycle 4)
Time: 9:30-10:45 A.M. Tuesday and Thursday, January 9–March 3
Location: Calvary University, East Education 116 and Online Classroom
Instructor: Joel T. Williamson, Jr., Th.M.
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I. DESCRIPTION

An analytical study of the Book of Acts that examines the foundation and early development of Christianity. Particular attention is given to the transition from Israel to the Church and to Paul's missionary journeys. (Prerequisite: BI115)

** This course is offered in two formats: in-person and online. Students registered for in-person attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. For both in-person and online students, assignments and interaction outside of the class period are done in the learning management system.*

II. OBJECTIVES

The basic goal of this course is not knowledge, but knowhow. “Knowledge is not knowhow until you understand the underlying principles at work and can fit them together into a structure larger than the sum of its parts. Knowhow is learning that enables you to *go do*.”¹ When you have knowhow, you are ready to explore the implications of the book of Acts for yourself. Growth in knowhow is a lifelong process and thus beyond the scope of this course. You can, however, make progress toward it in all three skill areas.

A. *Knowledge of Basic Facts.* You can't distinguish what's relevant from what's not unless you know the basic facts associated with the book. To help you achieve this awareness, you are expected to be able to specify all the following by the end of the semester: (PLO's: 1, 2) (Assignments: Readings, Quizzes, Examinations, Argument Paper)

1. The basic facts about the book—its author, recipients, date, occasion, theme, purpose, and structure.
2. The basic facts within the book—the chapter from which selected basic statements come.

¹Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 2014), 158. (The italics belong to the text quoted.)

Our Mission: "...to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview"

- B. *Solving of Knotty Problems.*** Only a reliable procedure can consistently provide reliable solutions when you confront an interpretive problem. Toward this end, you will demonstrate your ability to do all the following: (PLO's: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Assignments: Readings, Quizzes, Examinations, Personal Studies, Argument Paper)
1. Explain why selected interpretive problems need to be solved.
 2. Evaluate the relative strength of the solutions proposed for these problems.
 3. Derive and justify your own tentative solutions to these problems.
- C. *Insight into the Argument.*** You don't really understand a book until you see how all its parts work together to make a point. (The whole really is greater than the sum of its parts.) To show that you have made progress toward this level of understanding, you should be able to do all the following: (PLO's: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Assignments: Readings, Quizzes, Examinations, Argument Paper)
1. Discover the basic questions that the book addresses and the answers it provides.
 2. Discern the overall structure of the book's argument.
 3. Develop practical—and interpretively sound—applications of the basic message of the book.

III. TEXTBOOKS

- A. *Holy Bible.*** The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (paraphrases and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask me if you have questions about a particular translation or version.
- B. *Other Textbook.***
- Marshall, I. Howard. *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980. [ISBN: 9780802814234 — \$18.00]
- C. *Class Notes.*** I will make class notes and assignment helps available as needed during the semester.

IV. ASSIGNMENTS

It is my conviction that most of the learning and the best learning for this class will come through the assignments you do. Though they will be used to calculate your course grade, the primary purpose of the assignments for this course is to help you develop knowhow, the ability

to extract truth from God's word and infuse it into your life. Knowhow doesn't just happen; you must cultivate it. So, take out your spade; the process begins now.

- A. Reading (200 points).** Knowhow cannot develop without data. Therefore, your first responsibility is to fill your mind with the fundamental facts and teachings found in Acts. To gain this information, you will read the Book of Acts through three times and read the textbook through once. You will submit reading reports the week before each of the three major examinations. I will grade each reading according to the following scale: reading of Acts through (10 points), the assigned project for it (30 points), reading of the assigned portions of the commentary (3 points), and the assigned project for it (7 points) Although I will accept late reading reports through the last day of finals, late readings receive only HALF-credit; [partial or incomplete readings (less than all 28 chapters) receive NO credit.
- B. Quizzes (70 points).** Each week, I will post a quiz in Canvas to help you retain what you have learned. These quizzes will be cumulative and may cover material from any previous class session. In general, however, each will focus on the material covered since the last quiz. Understanding, rather than rote memorization is the best guarantee of a good grade. You may not make up a missed quiz.
- C. Examinations (480 points).** During the semester, you will take three online examinations. In these, you will demonstrate your competency in all three categories of course objectives, but particularly in the last two. Each exam will consist of five to seven questions. The first question will always be the same: "State the theme and purpose of the book of Acts and trace the major stages in its development along with the chapters in each." The remainder of the exam will consist of essay questions that require you to explain or apply material covered in class.
- Each exam will be cumulative, but the emphasis will always be on the material studied since the previous exam. Ordinarily, I will not allow you to take any exam late; however, if you know that you will miss an exam (for a valid reason), you may make arrangements with me beforehand.
- D. Personal Studies (150 points).** While knowhow does require a body of basic facts, facts alone are not enough. You also need skill in interpreting, correlating, and applying those facts. In short, you need to be able to see the big picture. An important part of this is the ability to solve problems. The personal study assignments are designed to help you develop that skill. Furthermore, by completing these assignments, you will also gain a deeper understanding of the message of Acts than you would get from just sitting in class.
- One of the most frustrating realities about Bible study is that godly men often disagree about what a passage means or how it should be applied. Sometimes, these disagreements can (and should) be ignored. More often, however, they cannot. In such cases, it is up to you to decide for yourself which explanation you prefer. Five times this semester, you will confront such a disagreement and respond to it in a 2 or 3-page paper. While the specific form will vary from study to study, each will require you to explain why the problem matters, (10 points) propose a solution (10 points), and justify your preference for it (10 points). Note: You MUST propose a solution— no matter how tentative it may be.) Personal studies may be submitted late, but late work receives only HALF credit.

- E. Argument of Acts (90 points and pass/fail).** In the seventh week of class, you will submit a ten-page, double-spaced summary of the argument of Acts using the non-research paper format. In this paper, you should accomplish three things: First, you must identify the theme and purpose of the book (different things) and justify your position using evidence from the book itself. Second, you must trace the basic phases in its development through the book, noting what each phase contributes toward accomplishing the book's purpose. Finally, you must suggest a practical contemporary application of the teaching of the book as a whole. In this assignment, more than any other, you will demonstrate how much knowhow you have about Acts. Therefore, ***you must complete this project to pass the course.*** You may submit it late for half-credit, but you must have it in my hands by the Friday after the last week of classes—***or you will fail the course.***

This should prove to be one of the most difficult—and most profitable—assignments you have ever tackled. To do it properly, you must do more than rehash the events reported in the book. You must explain why the book reports the events it does, why it supplies the details about them it does, and why it arranges them in the order that it does. The process is relatively simple, but it takes time (almost the entire course cycle) as well as concentrated effort.

The grade for your project will be based on the following four criteria: accuracy (30 points), adequacy (25 points), clarity (20 points), and mechanics (15 points). In other words, to get the best possible grade, you will need to get your facts straight, have enough of them to justify your conclusions, express your thoughts clearly, and use proper spelling, grammar, and form.

Specific Assignments Due Each Week

Week 1 (0 points)

Week 2 (110 points)

Quiz #1	10 points
Personal Study #1	30 points
Reading #1	70 points

Week 3 (200 points)

Quiz #2	10 points
Personal Study #2	30 points
Examination #1	160 points

Week 4 (110 points)

Quiz #3	10 points
Personal Study #3	30 points
Reading #2	70 points

Week 5 (200 points)		
Quiz #4	10 points	
Personal Study #4	30 points	
Examination #2	160 points	
Week 6 (110 points)		
Quiz #5	10 points	
Personal Study #5	30 points	
Reading #3	70 points	
Week 7 (100 points)		
Quiz #6	10 points	
Argument of Acts	90 points	(pass-fail assignment)
Week 8 (170 points)		
Quiz #7	10 points	
Final Examination	160 points	

V. METHODS

A. Teaching

1. **Lecture.** I will devote much of each class period to lecturing (often flavored with “sermonizing”), so come to class prepared to take notes. (Studies have shown that students that take notes by hand learn more and get better grades.)
2. **Question and Answer.** Notes are no substitute for learning. If you do not understand something, ask me to clarify it.
3. **Discussion.** Several deep and controversial issues complicate the exposition of Acts. I will allow a limited amount of class time for the inevitable disagreement and debate; however, I reserve the right to referee and terminate discussion. If you wish to continue the discussion (or to instruct the instructor!), you must make an out-of-class appointment.

B. Grading

1. Reading 210 points
2. Quizzes 70 points
3. Examinations 480 points
4. Personal Studies. 150 points
5. Argument of Acts. 90 points (pass-fail assignment)
- Total. 1000 points

C. Calculating the Final Grade

930–1000 points	A	730–769 points	C
900–929 points	A-	700–729 points	C-
870–899 points	B+	670–699 points	D+
800–829 points	B-	630–669 points	D
770–799 points	C+	0–559 points	F

D. Academic Issues and Support

1. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person’s ideas and presenting them as your own.
2. **Style.** All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.
3. **Assistance.** The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams, and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.
4. **Disabilities.** Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.